

Community resources

[Follow us on Twitter](#) [Check our Reddit](#) [Twitter this](#) [Digg this page](#) [Contact us on IRC](#)

courage is contagious

Viewing cable 08OSLO488, NORWAY WELCOMES AMBASSADOR VOLKER'S VISIT WITH A

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#08OSLO488**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
08OSLO488	2008-09-02 13:06	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Oslo

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsnight>

<http://www.bbc.com/news/>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/newsnight/9483790.stm>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-13378567>

<http://www.greenpeace.org.uk>

<http://www.greenpeace.org/usa/en/news-and-blogs/campaign-blog/new-wikileaks-revelations-shed-light-on-arcti/blog/34736>

<http://www.thenation.com/blog/160631/wikileaks-news-and-views-blog-thursday-day-166>

<http://blogs.ft.com/energy-source/2011/05/12/the-battle-over-greenlands-oil/>

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/canadianpress/article/ALeqM5ihhnQuXHwVOFswGcLlhFwiCs9gRQ?docId=6832936>

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jchSEXNkbbPv1AB4mJOcmsY2WddA?docId=CNG.4232f6ae19eb54c58c9d35b7f0b4995b.861>

VZCZCXYZ0000
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHNY #0488/01 2461306
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 021306Z SEP 08
FM AMEMBASSY OSLO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7024
INFO RUEHXP/ALL NATO POST COLLECTIVE
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 4014
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 1524

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 000488

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/02/2018

TAGS: [MARR](#) [MCAP](#) [NATO](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [NO](#)

SUBJECT: NORWAY WELCOMES AMBASSADOR VOLKER'S VISIT WITH A
PLEDGE TO FOCUS ON COOPERATION

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Kevin M. Johnson
for reasons 1.4 b and d

¶1. (C) Ambassador Volker's August 21-24th visit to Norway featured extensive private and public discussions on Georgia and on Russia including a well received address at Norway's leading foreign policy institute and extensive media coverage. In private, GON officials, including FM Stoere and Deputy Defense Minister Barth Eide, expressed a desire for closer cooperation with the U.S. in NATO and broad agreement on the seriousness of Russian actions in Georgia. Barth Eide and Stoere also stressed the need for NATO to return some of its focus to "Article Five" territorial defense core missions, including Norway's High North, although they both stressed the GON's continued commitment to Afghanistan. Ambassador Volker also met with the Afghan Ambassador to Norway to discuss the Afghan Ambassador's proposal for a public relations hub designed to assist Afghani Embassies in Europe.

Visit Overview

¶2. (C) Ambassador Volker visited Oslo, Stavanger and Bodo, meeting with FM Jonas Gahr Stoere and Deputy Defense Minister Espen Barth Eide and visiting the Joint Warfare Center in Stavanger and the Norwegian National Joint Command Headquarters in Bodo. In Oslo, Ambassador Volker also held a talk at the Norwegian Institute for Foreign Affairs covering his hectic first week on the job, U.S. actions and response to the Georgia crisis and long-term goals for a cooperative relationship with Russia. Norway's NATO Ambassador, Kim Traavik, accompanied Ambassador Volker throughout most of the trip.

Georgia

¶3. (C) Ambassador Volker expressed appreciation for FM Stoere's strong condemnation of Russian actions in Georgia. FM Stoere and Volker agreed on the importance of close allied cooperation when structuring NATO's relationship with Georgia and that the upcoming NAC visit to Tbilisi should not be about MAP status. Deputy Defense Minister Barth Eide expressed concern over the Russian interpretation of the ceasefire text and agreement that the Russian behavior was unacceptable. Barth Eide stressed the need for a long-term vision for NATO's relations with Georgia. In his remarks at the Norwegian Institute for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Volker described the U.S. policy on Georgia and reaction to Russia, stressing the short-term need to handle the crisis and the long-term desire to create a cooperative relationship with Russia.

Russia and NATO

¶4. (C) NATO's relations with Russia were the dominant theme of the visit and there was much discussion over the interpretation of the Russian diplomatic notes freezing military cooperation with NATO, delivered late on August 21. FM Stoere interpreted the Russian note as a pre-emptive move, after seeing how united the allies were in condemnation of Russian actions in Georgia. Stoere stressed the importance of a united alliance and requested that Norway, as well as the Baltic and Eastern European states, be included in discussions and decisions regarding Russia from the beginning. Stoere pledged to let the U.S. know divergent views but also that he would manage relations to focus on

cooperation. Barth Eide stressed the importance of NATO's returning to its core mission, maintaining security for its member's territory. He did not see Russia's behavior as new, merely the extension of policy from Putin's Munich speech. Barth Eide believed that a return in defense planning and focus on NATO's territory is necessary to maintain alliance unity, and to strengthen public understanding and support, particularly in Eastern Europe. Ambassador Volker agreed that this would be important but stressed the continued centrality of the fight against terror, reminding Barth Eide that Russia does not intend to attack NATO today, unlike terrorists. Ambassador Volker took this opportunity to press Norway to increase defense spending. Barth Eide admitted that budgets do not meet the two percent goal but pointed to increases in funding and staffing and the Norwegian military's presence in the North as positive developments.

Norway and Russia

15. (C) Stoere and Barth Eide both stressed that Norway does not want to escalate the crisis with Russia and does not see Russia as a threat. Both emphasized the GON's "two track" approach to Russia, keeping bilateral relations on its border and in the Arctic calm and productive, while criticizing Russia for its behavior elsewhere and supporting western multilateral organizations. The GON considers its bilateral relationship with Russia to be a model for other NATO allies and Stoere and Barth Eide were insistent on the need to maintain contact and dialogue with Russia on bilateral issues. In the multilateral arena Stoere stressed the importance of NATO solidarity and said that he had spoken with Lavrov after Russian threats against Poland. Ambassador Volker asked about increases in Russian bomber flights along Norway's coast and how the GON views this. Saying "we didn't miss them when they were gone" Stoere mentioned that he had stressed to Lavrov that the flights make it easy to convince the public that Norway should buy new fighter planes. Stoere also brought up the simulated cruise missile attack on Bodo during a Nordic foreign ministers meeting with Lavrov. Since then no such practice attacks have been seen. Stoere also mentioned Secretary Rice's comments about Russian flights along the Norwegian coast and stressed that the GON does not view them as a threat, despite growing Russian interest in Svalbard. Ambassador Volker agreed that this was a good public point but that in private the GON should recognize the clear message that Russia is sending to Norway and NATO. Barth Eide agreed on this point and mentioned the Russian aircraft carrier Kuznetsov's cruise through Norway's North Sea oil platforms as another incident of Russia sending a message.

6.(C) During briefings in Stavanger and Bodo senior Norwegian military officers stressed their concern over the potential for trouble with Russia in Svalbard. Russia disputes Norway's interpretation of the Svalbard treaty and has recently sent warships and fishery inspection vessels into the waters near Svalbard. Norway's CHOD publically stated that the potential for conflict with Russia is greatest in Svalbard. With the events in Georgia the Norwegian military seems to be focused on this potential threat and concerned that NATO is aware of this area of vulnerability. MOD sources indicate that the Minister of Defense will stress the Norwegian concern over Svalbard in the next Defense Ministerial.

Missile Defense and Cluster Munitions

17. (C) Barth Eide and Stoere seemed willing to maintain alliance unity and put disagreements over the cluster munitions treaty and missile defense behind them. In response to Volker's request to get away from the divisive dynamic around missile defense and cluster munitions, Stoere stressed the GON's continued skepticism with missile defense and said he personally remained to be convinced. He said that the U.S. should not take a lack of debate within NATO as agreement and asked if the missile defense systems will enhance security. Stoere also expressed satisfaction with the cluster munitions treaty but agreed to manage relations to maintain NATO unity and focus on the reaction to Russia's challenges. Barth Eide also was pleased with the cluster

munitions treaty and said that the credibility gained by Norway during the process allowed the GON to play an important role in assuring that harder line states did not overly impact the treaty. Barth Eide was less vocal on missile defense, saying that GON skepticism was largely for domestic reasons and that after the conclusion of agreements with the Czech Republic and Poland this would not be as contentious. Barth Eide also stressed that GON skepticism was not based on Russian objections. He proposed that ""just as the U.S. is adjusting to the cluster munitions treaty, Norway will relate to developments in missile defense.""

Afghanistan

18. (C) Discussing Afghanistan FM Stoere mentioned the GON's appreciation for strong U.S. support for Kai Eide and his UN coordination role. Stoere and Volker discussed the challenges of civilian-military coordination and agreed that the relative role of the military or civilian actors is situationally dependent and needs to be flexible. Touching on Pakistan-Afghan relations, Stoere said the role of the Pakistani intelligence service is key. He also mentioned that he has yet to hear any good answer on how to deal with Pakistan and that this may in fact be the most difficult question in the region.

19. (C) Ambassador Volker also met with the Afghani Ambassador to the Nordic region, Jawed Ludin, to discuss Ludin's proposal and request for funding for an Afghan focused media hub. The purpose of the hub would be to assist Afghan embassies in Europe react to media stories as well as proactively spread more positive stories about Afghanistan. Volker was supportive of the idea, suggesting that it needs to be located in Brussels to maximize press opportunities and promising to mention his support of the idea to Colleen Graffey.

Media Reports

10. (C) Media interest Volker's visit was high, with multiple print interviews and coverage by the two major TV channels as well as the major radio news station. Coverage focused on the actions leading up to the crisis and the long-term prospects for relations with Russia. Coverage was largely positive and supported U.S. criticisms of Russia's actions and the right of Georgia to determine its own future (although critical of Georgia's actions leading up to the conflict).

Comment:

11. (C) Ambassador Volker's visit to Norway has focused attention on the continued relevance of NATO and the need for close ties to the United States. The leader of the Conservative opposition party criticized the current Labor-led coalition for weakening ties with the U.S. and not providing enough funding for defense. Other voices have called for increases in Norway's defense capabilities and commitment to NATO. There is a general consensus here that Georgian actions were unwise and led to the conflict and that the Norwegian relationship with Russia is categorically different. Nonetheless Russia's actions in Georgia, combined with the increase in military activity in the Barents region, have strengthened advocates of increased defense spending and of the importance of maintaining a close relationship with the U.S.

WHITNEY